



# Context and culture matters!

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# Acknowledgement

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## Purpose, audience and objectives

Purpose	Related to the guide on defining disability, this guide explains two key concerns that are pertinent to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in programming. The experience of disability is often influenced by many factors including those based on urban or rural contexts, as well as culture – whether it is an open culture that is accepting of differences, or it is a closed culture that often has negative ideas about the experience of disability. This guide therefore considers some facts and figures on rural and urban contexts and why this needs to be considered when designing youth employment programmes, as well as thoughts around culture and how this may escalate concerns on stigma and discrimination and further exclusion of young people with disabilities.
Audience	It is one of a series of short guides developed by Sightsavers, within <b>Futuremakers by Standard Chartered</b> , and specifically written with Youth Business International programme partners in mind. While advice included in the document is more targeted towards YBI's youth entrepreneurship programme, we have tried to make these relevant to all Futuremakers projects.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To build greater disability confidence of the reader and how partners can better include youth with disabilities in their Futuremakers projects.</li><li>2. To give specific examples, advice and simple steps on how to adapt projects to be more inclusive of youth with disabilities.</li></ol>

## Urban and rural contexts

Barriers to participation faced by youth with disabilities differ depending on the context. Considering urban and rural contexts is useful to ensure that within programming, youth with disabilities are not further marginalised. Situational Analyses (SITANs) prepared for the **Inclusion Works Programme** that operated in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda offer a glimpse of some aspects worth considering.

- Urban and rural areas offer different livelihood opportunities. In Bangladesh for example, 8.3% of formal employment is in rural areas and 26% in urban zones.<sup>1</sup> In Kenya, people with disabilities living in urban areas had more access to paid work (25% compared to

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<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh Situational Analysis



9% of people with disabilities living in rural areas).<sup>2</sup> Similarly in Nigeria, unemployment rates for young people with disabilities were higher in comparison to their counterparts without disabilities<sup>3</sup>.

- Poor infrastructure and difficult terrain prevent access to both education and employment for people with disabilities, especially in rural areas.<sup>4</sup>
- People with disabilities in rural areas were more likely to have no education compared to urban areas.<sup>5</sup> In Nigeria, when it comes to disability and education as well as access to training, the participation rate of young people in education and training was 25% for those with disabilities, compared to 55% for those without disabilities. There is a similar trend when it comes to literary rates – with that of youth with disabilities being lower.<sup>6</sup>
- Negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities were also documented to be higher in rural contexts, with gendered aspects. A study that examined the impact of disability on the quality of life of people with disabilities in rural Bangladesh reported that more than half of people with disabilities were looked at negatively by society. Women and girls with disabilities experienced more negative attitudes than their male counterparts.<sup>7</sup>
- Prevalence of disability is in most cases higher in rural areas than in urban areas.<sup>8</sup> According to a **World Bank brief**,<sup>9</sup> the distance required to travel from more remote areas to find healthcare, combined with fewer financial resources to travel, are obstacles to accessing and benefiting from treatment.

## The influence of culture on disability stigma and discrimination

Attitudes towards disability and persons with disabilities more broadly are highly influenced by cultural beliefs. There are cultures who erroneously view disability as a curse or the influence of a bad spirit. Coupled with little exposure to disability and no lived experience, it is possible that individuals delivering programmes on disability may have a number of fears or misconceptions.

Negative attitudes which lead to stigma and discrimination can result into the exclusion of young people with disabilities within programming. Studies show more young people with disabilities are neither in education nor in employment in comparison to those without disabilities.

On disability stigma and discrimination, situational analyses (SITANs) prepared for the **Inclusion Works Programme** that operated in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda,

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<sup>2</sup> Kenya Situational Analysis

<sup>3</sup> Nigeria Situational Analysis

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Uganda Situational analysis

<sup>6</sup> Nigeria Situational Analysis

<sup>7</sup> Bangladesh Situational Analysis

<sup>8</sup> Inclusion Works, Situational Analysis, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda,

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/challenges-facing-people-with-disabilities-in-sub-saharan-africa-in-5-charts#:~:text=1.,accessing%20and%20benefiting%20from%20treatment>

reported that most respondents felt that attitudes to disability in communities were overwhelmingly negative due to harmful traditional beliefs and misconceptions about the causes and nature of disability and about what roles and rights persons with disabilities can have in society.

Due to stigma, young people with disabilities are excluded from economic and social activities, thus trapping them in a cycle of poverty. Whereas it may take time for communities to change their negative attitudes towards disability, there is a lot that can be done to put young people with disabilities in the driving seat in addressing stigma and discrimination resulting from negative cultural beliefs.

This includes the involvement of young people with disabilities both within the education system, as well as in livelihood programmes, and the strengthening of movements and organisations of young people with disabilities for self-advocacy. Self-advocacy refers to how young people with disabilities speak up for themselves and make decisions about their own lives. This can include learning how to get information so they understand things that are of interest to them, finding out who will support them in their journey, knowing their rights and responsibilities, problem-solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when they need help and friendship, and learning about making choices and decisions, based on their own preferences and interests.<sup>10</sup>

## Now that I know, what do I need to do?

- Be aware that young people with disabilities in rural areas are further marginalised, so programming needs to put in place specific measures including affirmative action measures to support young people with disabilities from rural areas to take part in programmes. This may include re-looking at criteria to join programmes, such as education and age criteria
- Budget for awareness-raising activities to counter negative narratives about young people with disabilities
- Design programmes that also put focus on further marginalisation that is experienced by young women with disabilities

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bridgesrc.org/the-importance-of-self-advocacy-for-youth-with-disabilities/>

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